

AUGUST 2020 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES

Year	Month	FOI Reference	Topic
2020	Aug	FOI/20/109	Advertising and communication campaigns
2020	Aug	FOI/20/110	Staffing ethnicity data
2020	Aug	FOI/20/111	Spending on departmental flights
2020	Aug	FOI/20/112	Correspondence on infected blood
2020	Aug	FOI/20/115	Correspondence with Richard Leonard MSP
2020	Aug	FOI/20/116	Spending on accessibility testing, accessibility audits and disabled user testing
2020	Aug	FOI/20/117	US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland: appointment of Mick Mulvaney
2020	Aug	FOI/20/118	Contracts with Chinese technology firms
2020	Aug	FOI/20/119	Senior civil servant contact details
2020	Aug	FOI/20/121	Unconscious bias training
2020	Aug	FOI/20/122	Covid-19 lockdown: staff resources and IT provisions
2020	Aug	FOI/20/123	Selling personal data
2020	Aug	FOI/20/124	Agencies and public bodies: staff ethnicity data
2020	Aug	FOI/20/125	Senior civil servant turnover

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/109
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>I would like to request a breakdown of all advertising/communications campaigns launched in 2019-20 by your department. The breakdown should include at least the following:</i> <i>• The name of each campaign</i> <i>• The purpose of each campaign</i> <i>• The budgeted cost of each campaign</i> <i>• The actual cost of each campaign</i> <i>• The active dates of each campaign</i>
Response	Freedom of information law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for in a request (section 12 FOIA). We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as to comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600. Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of correspondence. You should not infer from this that the Northern Ireland Office holds a large amount of information relating to the subjects you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large number of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request. You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12. Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.
FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/110

Month Issued	August 2020																																																																													
Request	<i>I am sending this request under the Freedom of Information Act to ask for the following information:</i> <i>1. Please provide figures for the numbers of employees in your government department (including catering and cleaning staff if possible) broken down by ethnicity within each pay band.</i> <i>2. Please provide figures for the numbers of employees in your government department (including catering and cleaning staff if possible) broken down by ethnicity within each internal department (e.g. finance, HR, policy areas etc).</i> <i>3. Please provide figures for the numbers of employees in your government department (including catering and cleaning staff if possible) broken down by ethnicity within each combination of pay band and internal department (e.g. finance, HR, policy areas etc)</i> <i>4. Please also provide a breakdown of pay bands as they relate to job titles in your department.</i>																																																																													
Response	In response to Q1 please see the table below showing the breakdown by ethnicity within each pay band. <table><tr><th></th><th>Band A</th><th>Band B</th><th>Band C</th><th>Band D</th><th>Band E/F</th><th>SCS</th></tr><tr><td>Arab</td><td></td><td></td><td><5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Asian - Pakistani</td><td><5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Black – African</td><td><5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td><5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Black – Caribbean</td><td><5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Mixed Black African and White</td><td></td><td><5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Mixes Black Caribbean and White</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td><5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Other Asian Background</td><td></td><td><5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Other Mixed Ethnic Background</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td><5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>White</td><td>35</td><td>20</td><td>16</td><td>14</td><td>9</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>Not Known/Prefer not to say</td><td>16</td><td>18</td><td><5</td><td>6</td><td><5</td><td><5</td></tr></table> Please note that we do not employ catering or cleaning staff. In respect of the questions two and three, the information you require is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOIA. The information held relates to five or fewer members of staff, therefore there is a risk that individuals subject to this information could be Identified. We are not obliged, under section 40(2) of the Act, to provide information that is the personal information of another person if releasing it would contravene any of the Data Protection Principles under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). In this		Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E/F	SCS	Arab			<5				Asian - Pakistani	<5						Black – African	<5				<5		Black – Caribbean	<5						Mixed Black African and White		<5					Mixes Black Caribbean and White					<5		Other Asian Background		<5					Other Mixed Ethnic Background					<5		White	35	20	16	14	9	14	Not Known/Prefer not to say	16	18	<5	6	<5	<5
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instance we believe that the release of this information would contravene the first data protection principle and therefore section 40(2) is engaged. The terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.

In relation to question four, we do not hold the information in the format you require but can provide the following data categorised in the broad business areas within our department.

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E/F
Comms	<5	<5			<5
Finance	<5		<5	<5	<5
Human Resources	<5		<5		
Information Technology			<5		<5
Knowledge & Information Management		<5	<5		
Operational Delivery	12	10	6	14	9
Policy Delivery	36	26	7	5	<5

SCS 1	11
SCS 2	<5
SCS 3	<5
Permanent Secretary	<5

The information provided relates only to Home Civil Servants employed by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and excludes staff seconded to the NIO from the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) as we do not have access to their information.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/111
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>This is an information request relating to flights undertaken by your department.</i> <i>Please include the following information:</i> <i>a. What has been the cost to your department on flights in the financial year 2019-20?</i> <i>b. What was the total number of flights your department purchased in the financial year 2019-20?</i>

	c. <i>Please also include:</i> • <i>the name of the airline used</i> • <i>the fare paid</i> • <i>the class of ticket (e.g. economy, premium economy, business, first)</i> • <i>the date of the flight</i> • <i>the port of departure</i> • <i>the port of arrival</i>
Response	a. The department has offices in both Belfast and London. In the course of their roles, members of staff often have to book domestic flights to travel between the two offices. The total cost of flights purchased by the Department in 2019-2020 is £505,781.32. b. The number of flight transactions relating to purchases by the Department in 2019-2020 is 2,305. c. The NIO does not hold this information in the format requested.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/112
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>Under FOI, I am requesting the following information:</i> <i>All e-mail correspondence (internal and external) sent by The Permanent Secretary at the Department of Finance, where the search term "infected blood" appears in the e-mail subject or body, during the period 1st July 2019 - 31st Oct 2019.</i> <i>Within the scope of this request, where an e-mail string is identified, please provide the full run of e-mail's associated with that string, including any attachments.</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office has looked through archives for the periods you cited. After a search of our records, we have identified material within the scope of your request. We note that this material was provided to you in response to a previous FOI request you submitted in November 2019, and advise you to refer to our correspondence in respect of FOI/19/235. We are not obliged to provide information if it relates to the formulation of government policy. In this case, the information is exempt under section 35(1)(a) of the FOIA. Section 35(1) (a) protects information relating to the formulation or development of government policy. We have considered the public interest in disclosing this information. <u><i>Public interest considerations in favour of disclosure:</i></u>

While there is a public interest in the way in which government decisions are made, and how relationships with other stakeholders are conducted, good government depends on good decision-making. This needs to be based on the best advice available and a full consideration of all the options without fear of premature disclosure of matters that are subject to the ongoing formulation of government policy.

Public interest considerations against disclosure:

Ministers and officials also need to be able to conduct rigorous and candid risk assessments of their policies and programmes including considerations of the pros and cons without there being premature disclosure which might close off better options. There needs to be a free space in which it is possible to “think the unthinkable” and use imagination, without the fear that policy proposals will be held up to ridicule from premature disclosure.

After careful consideration we have concluded that s 35(a) is engaged and it is in the public interest to withhold some of the documents.

If you require further guidance on S.35 please refer to the guidance at the end of this letter and the ICO guidance on ‘section 35’ at <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/2260003/section-35-government-policy.pdf>

EXPLANATION OF FOIA - SECTION 35 – FORMULATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

We have provided below additional information about Section 35 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful.

The legislation

Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities

- (1) Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—
 - a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
 - b) If that is the case, to have that information communicated to him.

Section 35: Formulation of government policy

- (1) Information held by a government department or by the Welsh Assembly Government is exempt information if it relates to—
 - a) the formulation or development of government policy,
 - b) Ministerial communications,

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| | <p>c) the provision of advice by any of the Law Officers or any request for the provision of such advice, or</p> <p>d) The operation of any Ministerial private office.</p> <p>(2) Once a decision as to government policy has been taken, any statistical information used to provide an informed background to the taking of the decision is not to be regarded—</p> <p>a) for the purposes of subsection (1)(a), as relating to the formulation or development of government policy, or</p> <p>b) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b), as relating to Ministerial communications.</p> <p>(3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of subsection (1).</p> <p>(4) In making any determination required by section 2(1)(b) or (2)(b) in relation to information which is exempt information by virtue of subsection (1)(a), regard shall be had to the particular public interest in the disclosure of factual information which has been used, or is intended to be used, to provide an informed background to decision-taking.</p> <p>(5) In this section—</p> <p>“government policy” includes the policy of the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the policy of the Welsh Assembly Government;</p> <p>“the Law Officers” means the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the Advocate General for Scotland, the Lord Advocate, the Solicitor General for Scotland, the Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government and the Attorney General for Northern Ireland;</p> <p>“Ministerial communications” means any communications—</p> <p>(a) between Ministers of the Crown,</p> <p>(b) between Northern Ireland Ministers, including Northern Ireland junior Ministers, or</p> <p>(c) between members of the Welsh Assembly Government</p> <p>and includes, in particular, proceedings of the Cabinet or of any committee of the Cabinet, proceedings of the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and proceedings of the Cabinet or any committee of the Cabinet of the Welsh Assembly Government;</p> <p>“Ministerial private office” means any part of a government department which provides personal administrative support to a Minister of the Crown, to a Northern Ireland Minister or a Northern Ireland junior Minister or any part of the administration of the Welsh Assembly Government providing personal administrative support to the members of the Welsh Assembly Government;</p> |
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	“Northern Ireland junior Minister” means a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly appointed as a junior Minister under section 19 of the M1Northern Ireland Act 19 <u>Guidance</u> Section 35 is aimed at protecting the policy-making process in order to maintain the delivery of effective government. It only applies to government departments (including a Northern Ireland Government Department) and the Welsh Assembly Government. Section 35 covers information that ‘relates to’: • formulation or development of government policy • ministerial communications • provision of advice by any of the Law Officers • the operation of ministerial private offices Information 'relating to' one of the categories above will include the substantive information falling within the description, for example, information which describes a new government policy, or is contained in a ministerial communication. It will also include other information which is about that information.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/115
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I request:</i> <i>All correspondence, letters and meeting requests received by Ministers and Secretaries of State in your department from Richard Leonard MSP (Scottish Labour leader) from 1st July 2019 to present.</i>
Response	We have conducted a search of our records and can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/116
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	1. <i>Please can you provide the total spend on accessibility testing, accessibility audits and disabled user testing carried out within your department broken down by supplier for the last three years?</i>

	2. Please can you also provide a breakdown of all spend for the last three years with the following organisations: • AbilityNet • Dig Inclusion Ltd • Digital Accessibility Centre Limited (DAC) • React Accessibility • Recite Me Ltd • Test Partners Ltd • Tetralogical • The Accessible Digital Documents Company Ltd • Shaw Trust Accessibility Services • Zimo Accessibility • Open Inclusion • Hassell Inclusion • SimpleUsability • Axaccessibility Ltd • Hex Productions • AccessEquals • Able AI
Response	1. The Department commissioned a tailored DDA Audit of accessibility at Stormont House in May 2017 at a total cost of £5,011. The audit and report were carried out by Gregory Architects. 2. The Department has not commissioned the services or made any payments to any of the suppliers listed above.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/117
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>I wish to submit the following Freedom of Information request:</i> <i>Access to all communications and records relating to the appointment of Mick Mulvaney to the role of US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland</i> <i>I wish to cover the following timeframe:</i> <i>March 1st 2020 - Present day</i>

Response	The Northern Ireland Office holds information which falls into the scope of your request. Some of this information you have requested is exempt under section 27(1) (a), (c) and (d) and under section 35(1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 27 exempts information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, the interests of the United Kingdom abroad, or the promotion or protection by the United Kingdom of its interests abroad. Section 35 exists to protect the integrity of the policymaking process, and to prevent disclosures which would undermine this process and result in less robust, well-considered or effective policies. In particular, it ensures a safe space to consider policy options in private. The information we are able to disclose is set out below. Public Interest Test Sections 27 and 35 are qualified exemptions and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours releasing or withholding this material. The Northern Ireland Office recognises there is a general public interest in knowing internal UK Government views about a US Administration appointment and to ensure that the public are able to scrutinise the manner in which public authorities reach important decisions. This makes for greater accountability, increases public confidence in government decision-making and helps to encourage greater public engagement with political life. The Northern Ireland Office also recognises that there is a general public interest in being able to evaluate the foreign policy of the government. However that has to be weighed against the public interest in the UK Government being able to discuss internally how to handle such appointments without that advice then becoming public and possibly disrupting the relationship with the US. This public interest also needs to be weighed against protecting the integrity of the policymaking process, and to prevent disclosures which would undermine this process and result in less robust, well considered or effective policies. I have weighed these public interests against a strong public interest in the United Kingdom being able successfully to pursue our national interests. We are more likely to do so if we conform to the conventions of international behaviour, avoid giving offence to other nations and retain the trust of our international partners. We also need to ensure a safe space to consider policy options in private. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information. Material for disclosure <table data-bbox="510 1345 2016 1374"> <tr> <th data-bbox="510 1345 813 1374">Document</th><th data-bbox="813 1345 2016 1374">Material in scope of your request</th></tr> </table>	Document	Material in scope of your request
Document	Material in scope of your request		

	Date: 2020/03/07 E-mail title: Mulvaney named Northern Ireland Special Envoy	You may have seen that the President just announced on Twitter that he was appointing Mark Meadows as his new Chief of Staff, with Mick Mulvaney appointed as Special Envoy for Northern Ireland.
	Date: 2020/03/07 E-mail: US Envoy to NI	We have been approached by FCO in relation to this morning's announcement by the White House that Mick Mulvaney is due to be the new Special Envoy to Northern Ireland. As you may be aware, SofS Lewis met with Mr Mulvaney last week, and is due to meet him once again this incoming week when he travels to the US for the St Patrick's Day events. As you know, the issue of US Envoy to NI is an NIO lead, and we would recommend the following lines for deployment: Lines to clear: - We welcome the announcement and appointment of Mick Mulvaney as the United States Special Envoy for Northern Ireland. - The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will meet with the Special envoy next week and we look forward to working with him to ensure Northern Ireland secures the many opportunities that lie ahead
	Date: 2020/03/07 E-mail extract: Draft FS Update. Mulvaney US-NI	Last night US President Trump announced on twitter that Republican Congressman Mark Meadows has been appointed White House Chief of Staff by President Trump, replacing Mick Mulvaney who will become the new US Special Envoy on Northern Ireland.
	Date: 2020/03/11 Congratulatory Letter from PUS (NIO) to Mick Mulvaney	I am sorry that unexpectedly I cannot be with you in Washington D.C. for this week's St Patrick's Day celebrations. I know that my Secretary of State, Brandon Lewis is looking forward to meeting you again and to discussing your exciting new role as US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland. I, myself, hope to visit D.C in the coming months. I want to extend my personal congratulations to you on your appointment and to emphasise my, and the Northern Ireland Office's, support to you as you take up this role. We stand ready to help you and your team in any way we can. I would encourage you to make an early visit back to Northern Ireland once you take up office.

		As you noted when we met there is lots still to do here, but I firmly believe that Northern Ireland is on a positive trajectory and your support on a number of critical issues will be very welcome in ensuring that this trajectory is maintained over the years to come.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/118
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>Please tell me how many contracts have been made by your department or any of its arms-length bodies with the following seven Chinese tech firms in the last three financial years (2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20).</i> <i>Please state the year in which the contracts were made, their values and a description of what services/products were purchased.</i> • <i>Alibaba</i> • <i>Baidu</i> • <i>Huawei</i> • <i>Lenovo</i> • <i>Tencent</i> • <i>Xiaomi</i> • <i>ZTE</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office has had no contracts with any of the seven Chinese firms referred to in your question in the last three financial years. The Department does not hold information on ALB contracts and you may, therefore, wish to contact these bodies directly and request this information.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/119
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>We are looking for the names and email addresses of all the Senior Civil Servants that work in a Ministerial Department. In particular, we are trying to identify the three most senior grades below Permanent Secretary for every branch of the UK Civil Service:</i> • <i>One or more Second Permanent Secretaries and/or Directors General.</i>

- *Directors*
- *Deputy Directors*

Is that possible to have a list with all their names and email addresses?

Response

Deputy Directors' names are exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act. In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and the Northern Ireland Office is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information.

Grade	Name	Role Title
SCS3	Madeleine Alessandri	Permanent Secretary
SCS3	Lindy Cameron	Director-General
SCS2	Chris Flatt	Director Strategy
SCS2	Mark Lamour	Director Political
SCS2	Colin Perry	Director Economy
SCS2	Andy Pike	Director Communications & Engagement
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, Corporate Operations Group
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, Constitution, Rights & Healthcare
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, Political Affairs
SCS1	Withheld	Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, Protocol & FTAs
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, Policy, Delivery & Readiness
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, Economy
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, External Relations
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, Legacy
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, Security & Protection
SCS1	Withheld	Deputy Director, Communications

They can be contacted via this email address: comms@nio.gov.uk

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/121
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>Please state if your department has spent any money to provide courses for your staff on the topic of unconscious racist bias in either of the last two financial years (2018-19 and 2019-20).</i> <i>For each course could you please state:</i> <i>• The exact title of the course,</i> <i>• How many of your staff attended,</i> <i>• Where the course was held</i> <i>• Who ran the course</i> <i>• How much the organisation was paid for running the course, and</i> <i>• Any material you hold on why the course would be useful to your staff and the goals of the course</i>
Response	In answer to your question regarding whether the NIO has spent any money providing courses to our staff in the last two years broken down into 6 separate questions, the answers are as follows: 1. The exact title of the course is: Diversity and Inclusion (2019) 2. This course is mandatory and must be undertaken by all members of staff in the NIO 3. It is an online course 4. The course is run by Civil Service Learning 5. The cost is included in an annual fee paid to Civil Service Learning for learning services where NIO staff can access various products. 6. The aim of the course is for staff to: - have an understanding of what unconscious bias is and how it can affect your work - be able to recognise different types of unconscious bias and their impact - know how to challenge your own thinking, and how to help create the right environment - be aware of some of the strategies you can use to minimise the impact of unconscious bias on decision making - be more aware of how stereotyping, bullying and harassment can affect work relationships and decisions

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/122
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>I would like to submit an FOI request regarding your department's communications and working practices during the lockdown.</i>

Specifically I would like responses to the following questions:

1. *For the period of lockdown (between March 23rd – 4th July), please answer the following questions regarding the staff in (XXXX government department) – if a question isn't possible to answer in the time allowed, please let us know:*
 - a. *What is the total number of civil servants (excluding third party contractors such as cleaners, security etc) in the department?*
 - b. *Of the department staff whose roles could have been performed from home – i.e. who did not have to be in the office in order to perform their jobs AND would not usually be expected to travel for work – how many couldn't work from home during lockdown due to device or connectivity issues (such as insufficient or unreliable broadband connectivity at home, or not having access to a suitable laptop or smartphone)?*
 - c. *How many department staff were put on furlough for some or all of the lockdown period?*
 - d. *How many staff could not perform their roles from home and so had to come into their regular workplace during lockdown?*
 - e. *How many staff were able to work from home during lockdown?*
 - f. *If possible, how many staff were restricted from full activities due to home devices not being capable of accessing secure information (such as information classified 'Official Sensitive', 'Secret' and 'Above Secret')*
2. *The next questions relate to IT spending:*
 - a. *What was the department's budgeted IT spend for the last tax year (April 2019 - April 2020)*
 - b. *How much was spent to get people online between March 23rd 2020 - July 4th 2020*
 - c. *Did the department have to request extra budget in order to respond to Covid-19?*
 - d. *If possible, how much extra budget did the department have to request?*
 - e. *If possible, how much was spent per person on internet and connectivity*
3. *Out of the following services, please let us know: i) which (if any) were used by staff who were working from home, and which (if any) staff were not permitted to use due to security concerns?*
 - a. *Zoom*
 - b. *Skype*
 - c. *Microsoft Teams*
 - d. *BlueJeans*
 - e. *WebEx*
 - f. *Google Hangouts*

	<i>g. Were any other technologies used not listed above</i> 4. <i>For the same period as the other questions (i.e. March 23rd 2020 – July 4th 2020), was the department’s minister ever unable to join meetings, virtual parliament or select committees as a result of technical issues such as device or connectivity problems? If yes please specify the number of occurrences.</i> 5. <i>If possible, how often did employees in your department experience the following during the lockdown (between March 23rd – 4th July) which affected their ability to communicate:</i> <i>a. Connectivity failures that meant staff couldn’t communicate</i> <i>b. Slow connection speeds</i> <i>c. Lack of appropriate equipment where people were working – e.g. suitable laptops or smartphones for secure video calls, or fast enough home broadband</i> <i>d. Broader communications outages e.g. the virgin media outage on June 25th</i>
Response	In response to your questions:- 1. a. There are 203 civil servants in the Department. b. Of the members of staff who could work from home there were no staff who could not work from home due to device or connectivity issues. c. No staff were put on furlough during the lockdown period. d. and e. We are not obliged to provide information that is intended for future publication (section 22 of the Act). In line with the terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act, we have considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to provide you with the information ahead of publication, despite the exemption being applicable. In this case, I have concluded that the public interest favours withholding the information. To be helpful all staff needing access were accommodated safely and were able to work. f. Information you have requested is exempt under section 31(1)(a)(b) and (g) of the Freedom of Information Act. The relevant parts of section 31 exempt information if its disclosure would prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders or the exercise by any public authority of its functions for the purpose of ascertaining whether any person has failed to comply with the law. The information contains details about the detection and prevention of crime which would assist criminals to plan and execute criminal acts and to avoid detection. Disclosure would thus make the prevention of certain crimes more difficult and reduce the effectiveness of the police service in detecting the perpetrators.

The exemption in Section 31 is a qualified exemption and whether the balance of the public interest favours releasing or withholding this information. There is a general public interest in disclosure of information and I recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government. I also recognise a public interest in assuring the public that effective arrangements are in place for the prevention and detection of crime. I have weighed these public interests against a strong public interest in the prevention and detection of crime. It is contrary to this public interest to disclose information which would facilitate the commission of crime or hinder its detection. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.

2.

- a. The Department spent a total of £969,000 against IT in 2019-20.
- b. All staff were already provided with laptops prior to the lockdown period therefore no additional monies were spent getting staff online.
- c. No
- d. Nothing
- e. Nothing

3. The following services were used by staff: Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Webex and Google Hangouts. There are no records held for any other specific technologies used. In relation to your question about security advice provided. Information you have requested is exempt under section 31(1)(a)(b) and (g) of the Freedom of Information Act. The relevant parts of section 31 exempt information if its disclosure would prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders or the exercise by any public authority of its functions for the purpose of ascertaining whether any person has failed to comply with the law. The information contains details about the detection and prevention of crime which would assist criminals to plan and execute criminal acts and to avoid detection. Disclosure would thus make the prevention of certain crimes more difficult and reduce the effectiveness of the police service in detecting the perpetrators.

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	account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information. 4. The department did not note any incidents during this period. 5. Parts a-d. The Department does not hold this information.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/123										
Month Issued	August 2020										
Request	<i>Can I please have your records concerning the sales of personal data from 2019 and 2020, including trading partners and money earned from transactions?</i> <i>Please can I have your records concerning the determining the price of personal data, for sales and sharing for the time period January 2019- Present.</i> <i>What is your internal procedure for selling personal data? By this, I mean guidance given to internal staff and the buyer in question, for the time period of January 2019- Present.</i> <i>What types of personal data do you sell and are there any limits placed on this? For the time period of January 2019- Present.</i> <i>How many Subject Access Requests did you receive in the period 2017-2020, broken down by year? What types of personal data did they typically receive? For example email addresses, home addresses and telephone numbers?</i>										
Response	In respect of your questions regarding the sale of personal data, I can confirm that the department does not sell personal data. Please see the figures below in respect of your question regarding the number of Subject Access Requests received by the NIO for the period 2017 - 2020: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th><th>Total</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2017</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr> <td>2018</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr> <td>2019</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>2020</td><td>1</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Total	2017	5	2018	10	2019	2	2020	1
Year	Total										
2017	5										
2018	10										
2019	2										
2020	1										

	Under Article 15 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), individuals are entitled to access the information that an organisation holds about them, subject to any permissible exemptions. In respect of the types of information provided, each request differs and depends on the nature of the personal data requested, but this can include email addresses, home addresses and telephone numbers.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/124
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>I am making this request under the freedom of information act to ask for the following information:</i> <i>Could we please receive a breakdown by ethnicity of</i> <i>a) all chairs and</i> <i>b) all board members</i> <i>Of all Public Bodies which your ministerial department 'hosts'. This includes each Arm's Length Body (ALB), executive agency (EA), non-departmental public body (NDPB) and non-ministerial department (NMD).</i> <i>Could these figures be broken down to show values for each individual public body?</i>
Response	We are not obliged, under section 40(2) of the Act, to provide information that is the personal information of another person if releasing it would contravene any of the Data Protection Principles under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). In this instance we believe that the release of this information would contravene the first data protection principle and therefore section 40(2) is engaged. The terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information. The ethnicity data that we hold is taken from the Diversity Monitoring Forms that candidates complete on application. We collect that to help us meet our public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and we do so with a guarantee of confidentiality.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/125
Month Issued	August 2020
Request	<i>I would like to submit a request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act about the most senior civil servants in the department. All my questions relate to the positions that would normally feature on the home page of the department on gov.uk. i.e. - director generals, non-executive board members, executive directors etc.</i>

	<i>I have attached an image of the positions I am talking about at the Cabinet Office. I am interested in those kinds of positions in YOUR department.</i> <i>My questions are as follows.</i> <i>1. How many civil servants in these positions have left the civil service since Boris Johnson became prime minister?</i> <i>2. How many received severance packages - including pension contributions - on departure?</i> <i>3. How many signed NDAs or similar agreements on departure?</i> <i>4. If it's possible to provide a breakdown of the information in questions 2 and 3 please do. I.e. who was paid severance, and how much did they get? And who signed NDAs or other agreements and what were the terms of those agreements?</i>
Response	In relation to question 1, the information you require is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOIA as fewer than five members of staff at this level left the organisation. We are not obliged, under section 40(2) of the Act, to provide information that is the personal information of another person if releasing it would contravene any of the Data Protection Principles under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). In this instance we believe that the release of this information would contravene the first data protection principle and therefore section 40(2) is engaged. The terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information. I can confirm in respect of questions 2, 3 and 4 that no-one received severance packages and no NDAs were signed.